

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10
INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-11
OES-09 SP-02 SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /150 W
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9884
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 07863

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC PARM TECH ENRG IR
SUBJ: REASSESSMENT OF IRAN'S NUCLEAR ENERGY PLANS?

1. EDITORIAL IN AUGUST 15 "KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL" TITLED "IT'S TIME
TO CALL A MORATORIUM ON ALL NEW NEGOTIATIONS IN NUCLEAR SECTOR" IS
OSTENSIBLY AIMED AT AUSTRALIAN URANIUM PURCHASE DEAL BUT CLEARLY
IMPLIES CRITICISM OF PENDING U.S. BILATERAL AGREEMENT. EDITORIAL
SINGLES OUT RETRANSFER AND REPROCESSING CLAUSES AS MOST OBJECTIONABLE

,
SAYING THAT THEY "COULD SERIOUSLY RESTRICT IRAN'S OPTIONS WITH
RESPECT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAMS." EDITORIAL
CLAIMS THAT WITH COMMITMENT FROM FRENCH AND GERMAN CONTRACTORS FOR
UP TO TEN YEAR FUEL SUPPLY, PAST PURCHASES OF 30,000 TONS OF URANIUM
ORE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, PLUS PROPOSED 15,000 TO 20,000 TONS
OF AUSTRALIAN ORE, IRAN MAY FIND ITSELF WITH OVER-
SUPPLY. SALE OF SURPLUS ORE, VOLUME OF WHICH MAY BE INCREASED "IF
SIZE OF NUCLEAR PROGRAM IS IN FACT REDUCED AS WE HAVE LONG
ADVOCATED," COULD BE BLOCKED BY COMPETITOR SUCH AS AUSTRALIA
DUE TO PRIOR CONSENT FOR RETRANSFER. ON REPROCESSING, "IRAN
HAS NO PLANS FOR SETTING UP DOMESTIC REPROCESSING FACILITIES
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AT PRESENT. BUT THEN IT SHOULD NOT FORCLOSE ITS OPTION TO
REPROCESS ITS FUEL INDEFINITELY EITHER." CALLING FOR NEW
NUCLEAR PROGRAM TO BE "DRAWN UP, NEEDS ASSESSED, AND
RESPONSIBILITIES CLARIFIED" EDITORIAL URGES THAT "IRAN SHOULD
NOT RUSH INTO AN AGREEMENT WHOSE IMPLICATIONS OVER THE NEXT
DECADE OR TWO ARE AT BEST UNCLEAR, AND AT WORST UNDESIRABLE."

2. THIS CRITICISM OF TWO SPECIFIC CLAUSES IN THE AUSTRALIAN DRAFT IMPLIES AN UNUSUAL ACCESS OF THE MEDIA TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. FRONT PAGE OF PAPER CARRIES ARTICLE REPORTING AUSTRALIAN URANIUM ORE AGREEMENT AS "RESTRICTIVE NUCLEAR DEAL". ARTICLE IS ALSO CRITICAL OF IRAN'S AMBITIOUS NUCLEAR POWER PLANS, WHICH IT STATES ARE UNDERGOING A REASSESSMENT.

3. WE HAVE HEARD THAT SUCH A REASSESSMENT IS UNDERWAY, BUT HAVE YET TO DETERMINE ITS MANDATE OR COMPLETE COMPOSITION OF REVIEW TEAM. AT THIS POINT IT COULD BE ONLY AN EXPRESSION OF CONCERN BY A SMALL GROUP, SINCE THE OFFICIAL LINE REMAINS FULFILLMENT OF COMMITMENT TO 23,000 MWE OF NUCLEAR POWER INSTALLED BY AROUND 1993.

4. INVOLVEMENT OF "KAYHAN" JOURNALIST BIJAN MOSSAVAR-RAHMANI (PROTECT EMBASSY KNOWLEDGE) IN AUSTRALIAN URANIUM TALKS AS WELL AS NUCLEAR REVIEW STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT THIS EDITORIAL HAS GOI, EVEN PM'S BLESSING AND MAY SERVE AS INTRODUCTION OF OFFICIALLY- ADMITTED RETHINK OF GOI ENERGY STRATEGY.
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